

SENATE NATURAL RESOURCES

EXHIBIT NO.

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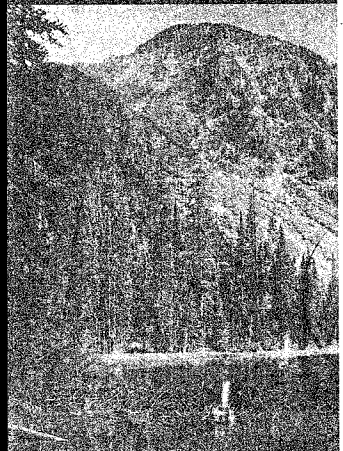
FEB. 16, 2009

BY

S. J. R.

THE WINTON WEYDEMAYER WILDERNESS

ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY LEGACY



WHITETISH RANGE
NORTHWEST MONTANA

A Letter From Our Secretary of State



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Winton Weydemeyer had wisdom as deep and powerful as the Kootenai River. Quiet and introspective, Winton's strength was projected by simple statements that made his meaning clear. I never heard him say an unkind thing. I never heard him say a deceptive thing.

Winton was proper. Winton was distinguished. I doubt anyone ever knew him who did not respect him. He was an able public speaker in a low-key but eloquent way. I remember him addressing farm families at a Grange meeting when I was a boy. His sincerity and calm presence that compelled attention. My parents sat riveted. So did I. His sincerity and clarity made even the details of "parity" and the farm program seem profound and worthy of our thoughtful attention.

When I was an adult and visited with him at Fortine, we sat beside each other for several minutes in silence, and it felt comfortable and natural. Winton was at one with the natural world. He viewed himself as a part of the body of nature. He was conservative, consistently. He believed in the preservation of fundamental values as well as resources. He lived close to the land. He raised cattle for slaughter and managed his forestland for timber, Christmas trees and pasture. He was self-sufficient. He didn't look to government aid and was wary of its power.

But Winton had a primal kinship with the creations of nature, as well as a gentle but inherent skepticism of the nature and creations of man. That is what made him fear what he recognized as humankind's ungovernable instinct to tame, develop, harness and exploit. That is what made him a philosopher. That is what made him unspooled and genuine and deeply wise.

Bob Brown

"Winton was at one with the natural world. He viewed himself as a part of the body of nature."

THE WINTON WEYDEMEYER WILDERNESS PROPOSAL

One Man's Dream

WINTON WEYDEMEYER was a Montana rancher, farmer, tree farmer, back-country user and wilderness lover. A man of his times but ahead of his time in his appreciation of wild country, Weydemeyer acted to preserve a vestige of his wilderness heritage at the very beginning of conservation thinking in America. In 1925, some 39 years before passage of the national Wilderness Act of 1964, Weydemeyer first proposed the



Whitefish Range Wilderness in American Forest and Forest Life Magazine, the journal of the American Forestry Society. The wilderness of Glacier National Park flowed into country designated in Weydemeyer's plan as "adjacent to the Canadian boundary and the west boundary of Glacier National Park, with a central roadless area of approximately 485,000 acres — half as great as the area of the park itself." Unfortunately, while he pursued the goal of a designated Whitefish Range Wilderness throughout his adult life, this Montana Conservation luminary never saw his proposal succeed in his lifetime.

Today, roads and human use have reduced the core wild area of the Whitefish Range to approximately 171,000 acres, about one-third of Weydemeyer's original wild landscape. Such dramatic shrinkage of untamed, irreplaceable wild country only emphasizes Weydemeyer's foresight. This pamphlet presents the case anew for Congressional designation of the Winton Weydemeyer Wilderness.

The map (found at the center of this publication) depicts the boundaries of the proposed Winton Weydemeyer Wilderness.

Birth of the Whitefish Range

THE WHITEFISH RANGE formed 75-100 million years ago from sand and clay eroded from tall, now-vanished mountains. Rivers carried these mountains away one grain of mud and silt at a time, to a vast sea. The sediments built upon themselves in the sea in even, cake-like layers and eventually, over millions of years, hardened into rock. The newly formed rock, siltstone, mudstone and limestone, reached thousands of feet in depth.

The bedrock of the Whitefish Range actually originated some 40 to 50 miles west of its present location. The extreme pressure created by the perpetual shifting of the earth's crust forced the rock of

The Whitefish Range formed 75-100 million years ago from sand and clay eroded from tall, now-vanished mountains.

the Whitefish Range to shift upward toward the sky as well as to slide eastward to its present location. Eventually, the crust's compression eased and the mountain blocks settled, creating the valleys of the North Fork and Stillwater Rivers, part of the Rocky Mountain Trench system.

No sooner uplifted into new mountains, erosion began the gradual



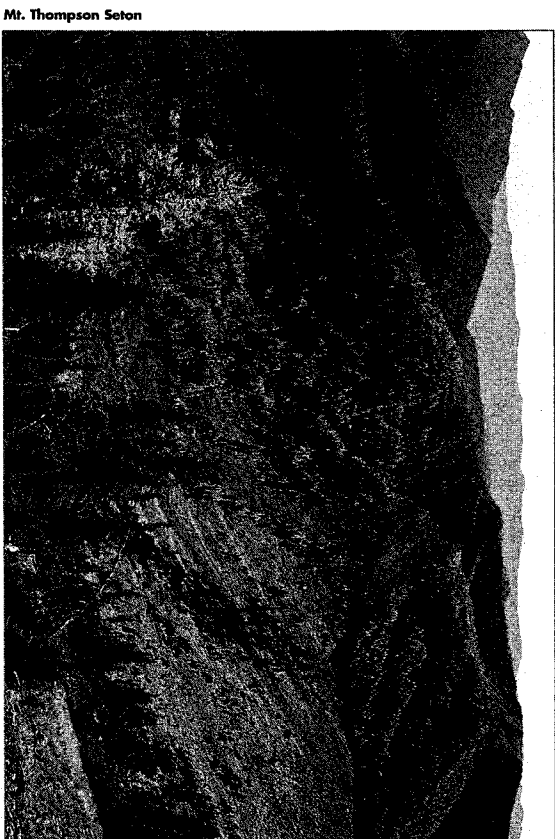
Graves Creek, Photo: Winton Weydemeyer

sculpting of the Whitefish Range, resulting after more millions of years in the familiar landscape we know today. About two million years ago, a continental ice sheet, or glacier, flowed south out of Canada filling the main valleys. Smaller valley glaciers originated in the Whitefish Range, grinding and slipping east into the North Fork and west into the Stillwater areas. These glaciers carved and smoothed the jagged features of the range, leaving its valley floors strewn with unsorted rocks, boulders, gravel, sand and other debris. Smaller glacial epochs have since come and gone, the last retreating some 10,000 years ago.

Time, water, ice and weather created the varied features of the Whitefish Range. Today, a richness of valleys connects mountain passes north and south. Plants and animals, including man, traveled to and established themselves in this once raw country. In a relatively short period, the story of life has been written across this sublime land.

Climate for Plants

PLANTS SETTLED into the Whitefish Range like hardy homesteaders. The peaks and valleys are in the "Pacific Maritime" climate, strongly influenced by weather moving in from the Pacific coast. Precipitation in the lower valleys and foothills averages 16.5 inches of rain and 6.5 inches of snow. The surrounding mountains receive, on average, twice this amount. All this moisture makes good habitat for trees, shrubs, grasses and smaller flowering plants. Conditions have been made better by the fertilizing effect of volcanic ash from active volcanoes on the West Coast, deposited here by prevailing easterly winds. The last such event was the Mount St. Helen eruption in Washington state in 1980.

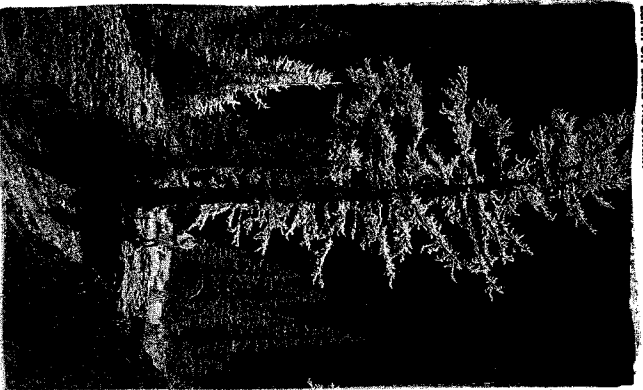


Mt. Thompson Seton

Trees, mountains and climate in the Whitefish Range create spectacular vistas. They also set the stage for a significant natural phenomenon: wildfire.

Trees, like all living things, have their preferred habitats. In the Whitefish Range, Western red cedar, western hemlock, and grand fir thrive in the wettest sites: creek bottoms and lower north-facing slopes. Engelmann spruce, Douglas fir and white pine do best at mid elevation on moist sites. Sub alpine fir flourishes at mid to higher elevations, often becoming shrub-like (krummoltz) at tree line. Western larch,

Larch on Lake Mountain



Ponderosa and lodgepole pine grow better on sites that face south, or where the soil allows water to drain. White bark pine colonizes the higher ridges where there is abundant moisture in the fall and spring, but little during the short summer season.

Trees, mountains and climate in the Whitefish Range create spectacular vistas. They also set the stage for a significant natural phenomenon: wildfire. Western larch, ponderosa, white bark and lodgepole pine all require fire to get started or maintain dominance. Wildfire influences which trees grow, where they grow, the age of forest stands, and the types of shrubs and forbs growing beneath the trees.

In the Whitefish Range, major wildfires burned in 1910, 1929, 1988 and 2001. These fires altered large areas of the forest and account in large part for the diversity of wildlife habitat found throughout the range. For example, the huckleberry, a critical food for grizzly bears, now grows so abundantly in the area that the U.S. Forest Service protected most of Trail Creek drainage as a special grizzly bear management area.

Habitat for Wildlife

BIOLOGISTS VIEW the proposed Winton Weydemeyer Wilderness and neighboring landscapes as one of the most critical areas in North America for wildlife conservation. Geology, climate, and plant life comprise animal habitat, or niches. Habitat in the Whitefish Range is abundant and diverse. Every wildlife species (except the mountain caribou) that lived in these mountains at the time of European colonization survives here. Grizzly, black bear, gray wolf, mountain lion, lynx, bobcat, wolverine, fisher, marten, white-tail and mule deer, elk, bighorn, moose, beaver, otter, mink, bald and golden eagle, owls, bull and cutthroat trout, toads, frogs, salamanders, and many lesser species make their living in these hills and waterways.

The North Fork is one of the most biologically rich, ecologically important valleys anywhere in North America.

Scientists believe survival of such species as bull trout, bears, and other large carnivores depends on their habitats connecting across the U.S.-Canadian border encompassing the proposed wilderness northern boundary. Fish and wildlife are unaware of international borders, yet wildlife studies show conclusively that local wildlife populations use seasonal habitats on north and south sides of this one.

Dr. John Weaver of the Wildlife Conservation Society concluded that the North Fork valley is "perhaps the most important watershed for predators in North America." Dr. Jack Stanford, Director of the University of Montana Biological Station on Flathead Lake, has observed that the North Fork "is one of the most biologically rich, ecologically important valleys anywhere in North America."

Human Presence

HUMANS, LIKE EARLIER ANIMALS, first walked into the region following valley trenches left by eons of mountain uplifting and settling, glacier gouging, and river carving.

The Ktunaxa, called the Kootenai in the U.S. and the Kootenay in Canada, came from the north bringing a culture of tool making and human society at least 10,000 years ago. The Ktunaxa themselves relate that they "trace their roots back to the beginning of time...from when the first sun rose in the sky and human beings were equal to the animals." The Ktunaxa settled in this habitat, becoming intimately familiar with the land and its other wild occupants, establishing travel routes and naming landmarks throughout the Whitefish Range. The Ktunaxa language describes many landmarks within the proposed Winton Weydemeyer Wilderness: Akinkaka Mountain (place of red willows), Nsukoin Mountain (chief), Tuchuck Mountain (thumb), Yaknikak Creek (moose trail).

There has never been permanent human settlement in the proposed Winton Weydemeyer Wilderness; however, humanity has been increasingly busy at its perimeter.

The Hudson Bay Company traded with the Ktunaxa in the years after British explorer David Thompson discovered the upper Columbia River in the early 1800s. The Company established a trading post in the Tobacco Valley west of the Whitefish Range, and later kept a short-lived post at Red Meadow Creek in the North Fork Valley. The British and U.S. settled the dispute over the location of the international boundary in the treaty of 1846.

In 1897 President Grover S. Cleveland established the Lewis and Clark Forest Reserve, which includes the land area of the proposed Winton Weydemeyer Wilderness. Homesteaders made incursions into the North Fork valley beginning in the late 1890s. By 1910 there were 14 homesteads on the west side of the river and 44 on the east. In total, about 150 parcels were settled. U.S. Post Offices operated at Bowman Lake, Trail Creek, Kintla Lake, and Polebridge.

Nsukoin Mountain



The Kalispell Chamber of Commerce and homesteaders opposed the creation of the Park, saying it locked up timber and potential farmland that had "no particular scenic value" and would never attract tourists.



The Whitefish and Livingston Ranges

Winton Weydemeyer's grandparents settled in the Tobacco Valley in the late 1890s as well. The Tobacco Valley saw more rapid settlement than the North Fork due in part to a better agricultural environment and the building of the Great Northern Railroad. The rough road first established in the early days has since been transformed into a modern highway, forming a commercial artery between Canada and the U.S.

Bear pelts smelling of kerosene prompted short-lived oil prospecting at Kintla Lake in what is now Glacier National Park. Oil prospectors cleared the first road and hauled drilling equipment up the east side of the North Fork River. These efforts failed to discover oil, and prospecting in the basin ended in 1903 for several decades.

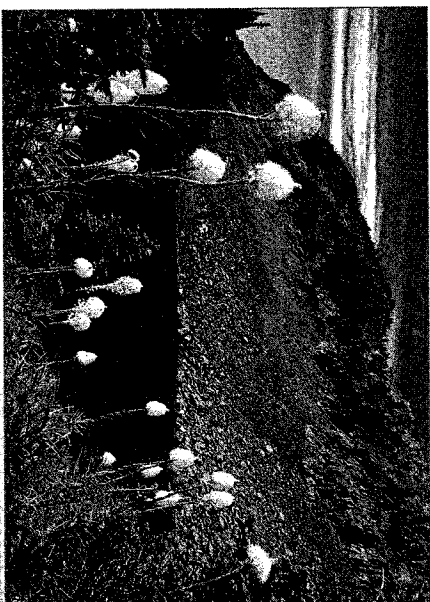
Glacier National Park was established in 1910 across the North Fork River to the east from the Whitefish Range. The area's burgeoning human population debated the worthiness of the idea. The Kalispell Chamber of Commerce and homesteaders opposed the creation of the Park, saying it locked up timber and potential farmland that had "no particular scenic value" and would never attract tourists. Now, 90-plus years later, Glacier is the Crown Jewel, not only of the continent, but also of the area's tourism economy. Many have found peace and delight in the elemental wonders of Glacier's wilderness.

Wildland Development and Restoration

IN ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM, Theodore Roosevelt intended that prudent and scientific means be used in management of federal forest lands. He wanted America to use its forests, but he also meant for this new national system to protect them from the pillage of unregulated clear-cuts as experienced in the country's East and Midwest.

Winton Weydemeyer was born in 1903 at the beginning of the modern national forest era. When he

Winton Weydemeyer was born in 1903 at the beginning of the modern national forest era.



Bluebird Lake

first saw it, the Whitefish Range remained an unbroken wilderness of almost a half million acres. Over the course of his lifetime, he watched this truly wild landscape change as roads penetrated to areas once reserved for the hiker or horseback rider. The Great Depression and Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal ushered in industrial forestry. The forest wilderness that had stretched unbroken from the Kootenai River to Glacier Park began to recede.

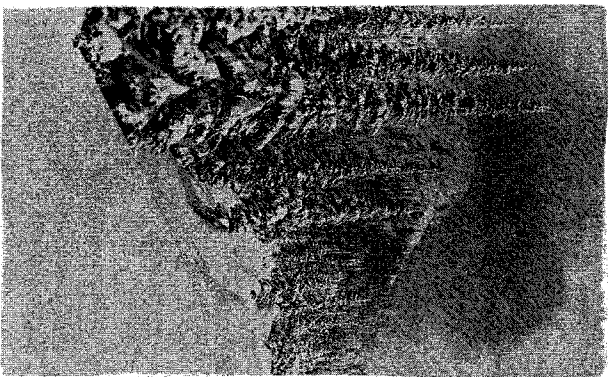
In the 1920s the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) built a road north from Olney on the Stillwater River to the Whitefish Divide at Red Meadow Pass, then down Red Meadow Creek to the North Fork. (See "Disappearing Wildlands" map, pages 12-13). The CCC also built roads up Fitzsimmons Creek and over Martson Ridge. Forest Service roads soon followed. Graves Creek Road penetrated all the way to the Theriault Lakes in the Ten Lakes area, with spur roads built into many tributaries.

After World War II timber harvesting on national forests accelerated. Roads preceded timber harvests up Trail Creek, Yakinikak Creek, Teepee Creek, Whale Creek, Moose Creek, and tributaries. For decades the timber industry pushed cutting of public forests. Such cuts often exceeded sustainable levels of harvest for years, leaving wildlife habitat denuded, scarred, and inhospitable.

The Forest Service finally curtailed the amount of timber cut in the Whitefish Range to a fraction of

the historic volume. But industry had already cut the big trees of the valley bottoms and lower slopes and left less than five percent of the old growth. The overcutting caught up with the industry at the same time that Canadian importation of lumber escalated and the public demanded better stewardship of endangered species, water quality, and the public purse. These events have led to the rest and restoration of a landscape that was worked hard for decades.

In recent years, some impacts to wildlife and water quality associated with forest roads and timber harvest have been reversed. The map on pages 12 and 13 illustrates the net loss of roads in the north end of the Whitefish Range. Concern over the security of habitat for elk started a process to close unnecessary Forest Service roads. Concerns over habitat security for grizzly bears followed. The Flathead National Forest adopted Amendment 19 to the Forest Plan in 1989 that set limits on the density of roads in the Forest. More recently, declining Forest Service budgets have necessitated further closures of roads and reduced spending on road maintenance. In the Whitefish Range this has translated into more secure wildlife habitat, the restoration of fish spawning streams, and a landscape that people visit and cherish for its wild character.



Deep Mountain, Photo: Winton Weydemeyer

Th e *Winton Weydemeyer Wilderness:* *A BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE*

The eons that produced the natural wonders of the Whitefish Range have brought us to a moment ripe for decisions. In the few years since WWII, hard-working people have extensively roaded and logged the range. The Whitefish Range was altered by force of will as our society changed and grew. Change continues even now.

Weydemeyer valued wild nature for its own sake well before society recognized and enshrined that value in the National Wilderness Preservation Act of 1964.

Today the future of the Whitefish Range rests in part on the public and political will to establish a 171,000 acre Winton Weydemeyer Wilderness. Many factors recommend this action. The Winton Weydemeyer Wilderness would protect:

- the integrity of the landscape for increasing backcountry and visitor use that complements the same visitor population of Glacier National Park;
- the critical habitat of the densest inland population of grizzly bears in North America;
- important seasonal habitat for migrating international populations of elk and moose;
- the continuity of wildlife habitat across the US-Canadian border; and
- the headwaters of important spawning habitat for the threatened bull trout and west-slope cutthroat trout.

Ten Lakes area

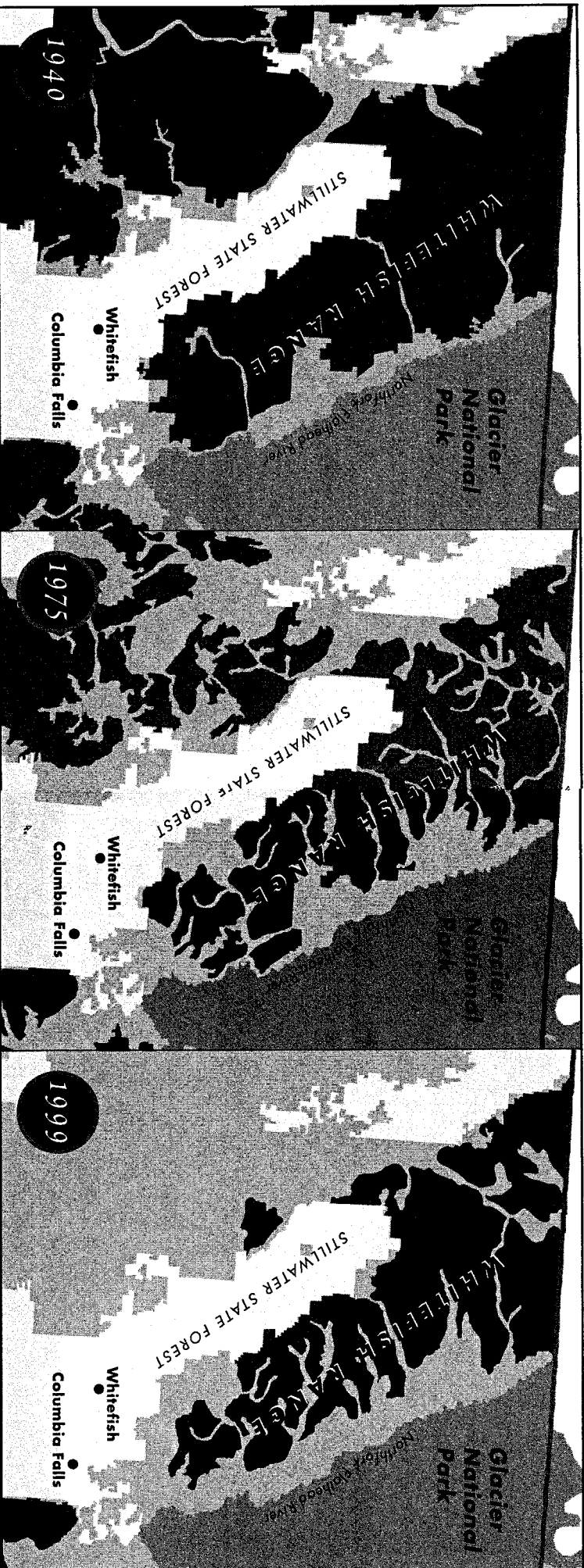


Lastly, this proposal honors Winton Weydemeyer, a Montanan who understood in 1925 society's simultaneous need for natural resources and the spiritual refreshment found in wild country. He recognized wilderness as an essential — and vanishing — component of our nation's heritage. Weydemeyer valued wild nature for its own sake well before society recognized and enshrined that value in the National Wilderness Preservation Act of 1964.

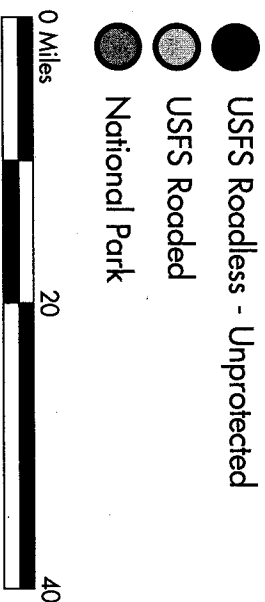
Disappearing Wildlands

AFTER WORLD WAR II, timber harvesting on national forests accelerated. This pattern continued for over 50 years. Due to public concern over wildlife, water quality, and the cost of maintaining roads, the Forest Service began to close some forest roads. In the Whitefish Range this has translated into more secure wildlife habitat, the restoration of fish spawning streams, and a landscape cherished for its wild character.

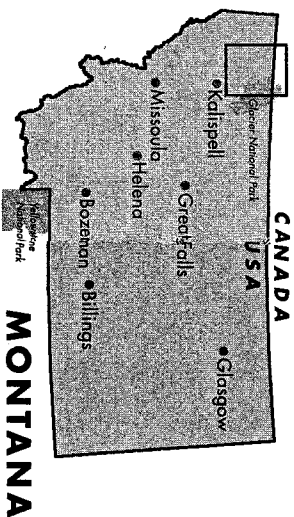
ROADLESS AREAS ON THE KOOTENAI AND FLATHEAD NATIONAL FORESTS IN NORTHWESTERN MONTANA



Map Legend



Map Area



Data Source Statement:

Base Data: The base data for the map (major lakes, state boundary, places, designated wilderness, national parks, and USFS boundaries) are from the Montana Natural Resource Information System at the Montana State Library.

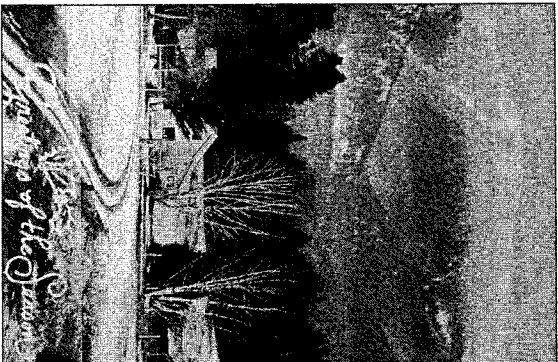
Roadless Areas Data: The 1999 roadless area data are from the Montana Wilderness Association's Roadless Areas Inventory Project, January 2000. The 1940 and 1975 roadless area data are from Desktop GIS, Helena, Montana, August 8, 1994.

MONTANA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION

PART II
BIOGRAPHY OF WEYDEMEYERWINTON WEYDEMEYER: *Montana Conservation Luminary**Weydemeyer's Early Years*

ONE COULD DO WORSE THAN be raised in the Tobacco Valley of northwest Montana at the turn of the 20th century. Winton Weydemeyer's good fortune was to be born in 1903 to a pioneer-spirited family who had recently moved west from Michigan to ranch and farm in the Fortine area under the morning shadow of the Whitefish Divide. The farm is still in the Weydemeyer family. Winton's close ties to family and his family's close ties to the land nurtured his young life.

Weydemeyer Homestead, photo: Winton Weydemeyer



Winton Weydemeyer's good fortune was to be born in 1903 to a pioneer-spirited family.

This paradise surrounded young Winton. The morning sun did not crest the Whitefish Divide until well after daylight at the Weydemeyer farm, so close was it to the mountains. Clean water flowed. Deer, elk, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, grizzly and black bears existed in abundance. Weydemeyer's father, Harry Weydemeyer, took Winton, then ten years old, on his first backcountry trip up Deep Creek, over Theriault Pass and into the wild core of the Ten Lakes country. It seems that with that trip at such an impressionable age, Winton Weydemeyer became a dedicated lover of wild country.

As Weydemeyer and his brother, Donald Robert, matured into young men, they tramped the hills, ridges, and stream bottoms of their backyard country, learning the sights and places. They hardened their bodies with the rigors of forest exploration, learned the ways of the forest, and became expert in woodcraft.

Growing Up Grange

YET AS POWERFUL as the effect of that fresh country was, Weydemeyer's education played at least an equal role in shaping the community and conservation leader he would become. His parents instilled a love of literature, along with respect for schooling and the beliefs of the Patrons of Husbandry, or the "Grange." As the saying used to go, Weydemeyer "Grew Up Grange."

Whitefish Peak, photo: Winton Weydemeyer



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Founded in 1867 by Oliver H. Kelly, a one-time Department of Agriculture field investigator, the Grange movement was a formidable force in the 1880s into the early 1900s. Kelly conceived the Patrons as an apolitical educational organization promoting reading and information for small farmers. However, the needs of America's family farmers were so great that the Patrons eventually adopted a progressive political agenda, promoting cheap rail transportation for agricultural products, cheap public power, rural electrification, Rural Free Delivery of US Mail, soil conservation, and other beneficial accomplishments. They opposed grain monopolies and high taxation. The Montgomery Ward catalog company sponsored and promoted The Patrons, and the Grange grew to over 700,000 members nationwide at its peak.

The Grange philosophy of husbandry and respect for the land took root in the young Weydemeyer. Weydemeyer based his ethics and philosophy in large measure from his Grange education. He remained active in the Grange his entire life, authoring Grange publications and serving for decades as Grange Master.

THE WINTON WEYDEMAYER WILDERNESS (PROPOSED)

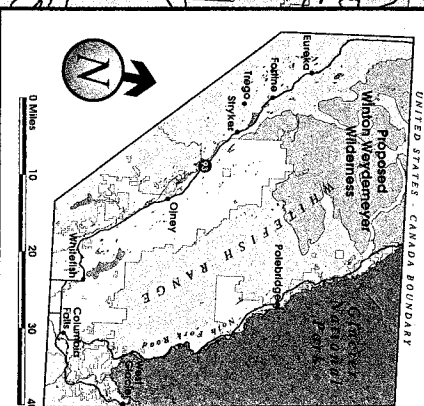
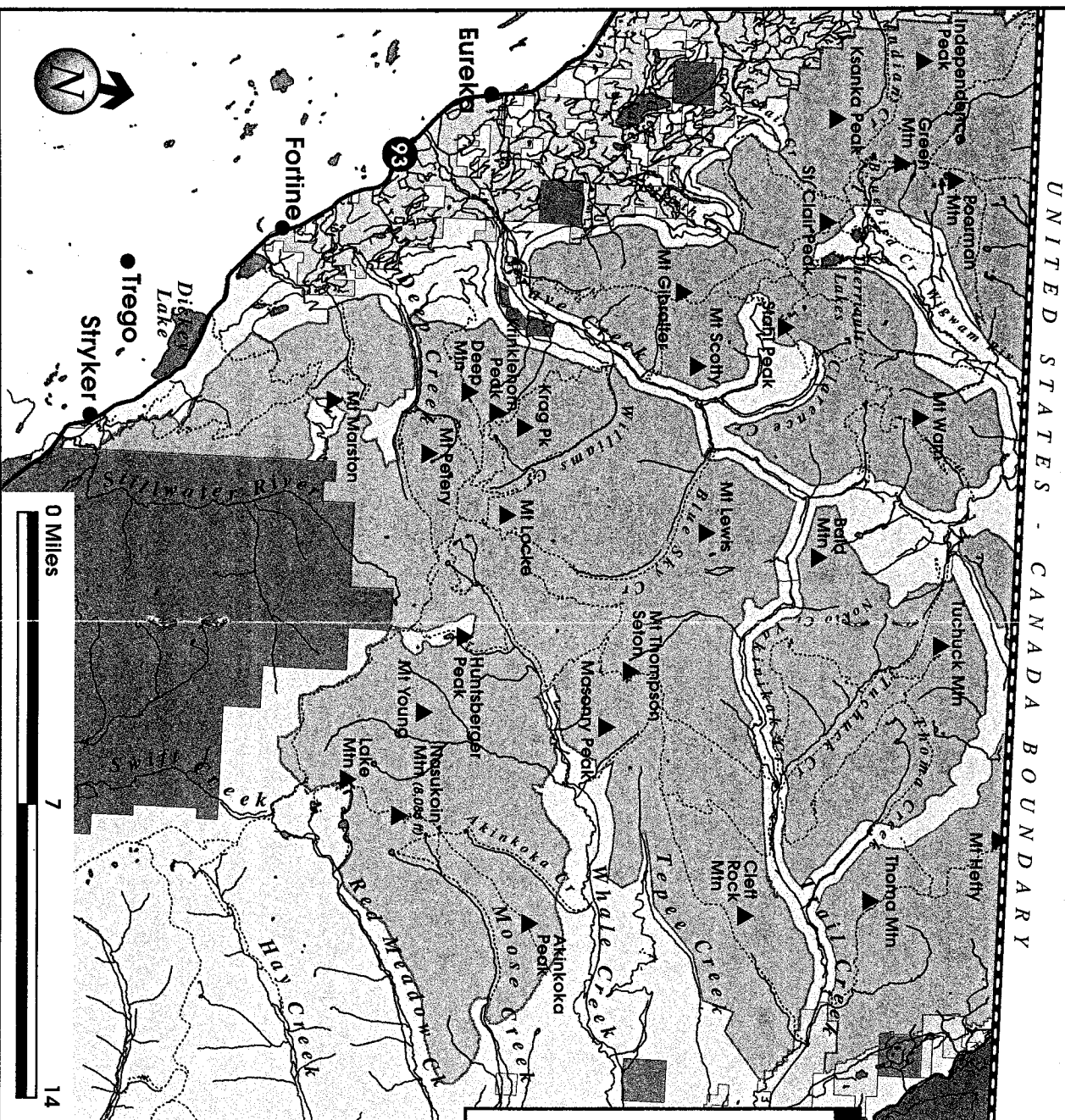
Montana's Wilderness Legacy

Montana conservation luminary, Winton Weydemeyer, first proposed a 485,000-acre wilderness for the Whitefish and Gallatin ranges in 1925, 39 years before the passage of the Wilderness Act. At that time, unbroken wilderness extended from Glacier National Park all the way to Eureka, and from Whitefish to the Canadian border. Today the heart of that magnificent wilderness still remains, a total of 171,000 acres.

Wilderness is a finite and invaluable resource of Montana and the world. Wilderness protects our headwaters, provides security for rare and endangered wildlife, is a living laboratory for the study of natural systems, and provides space to recreate and refresh our souls.

Wilderness also anchors our local quality of life and defines the Montana psyche. Yet, of Montana's 93 million acres, only 3.4 million (a mere 3 percent!) is protected as wilderness.

The proposed Winton Weydemayer Wilderness honors the conservation legacy of Winton Weydemeyer (1903-1992), Fortine rancher and tree farmer, Republican state senator, Grange Steward, and life-long Montana conservation leader.



- REFERENCE MAP**
- Proposed Winton Weydemayer Wilderness
 - National Forest
 - State Land
 - Private Land
 - Glacier National Park
 - Roads
 - Loops
 - Shearings
 - Trails

The Montana Wilderness Association works to protect wilderness, wildlife habitat, and traditional recreational opportunities for everyone. Please join us in this important work.

MONTANA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION

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(406) 755-6301 / e-mail: mwmta@wildmontana.org
www.wildmontana.org



keep it wild.

The Aldo Leopold Connection

A GOOD STUDENT, Weydemeyer enrolled at Montana State College in Bozeman (as Montana State University was then called) and graduated with highest honors from the agricultural school. He served a year and a half as director of the Moccasin Experiment Station in the Judith Basin before returning to his roots in the Tobacco Valley. During his college days he'd involved himself in current conservation issues, returning to the subject in debate and oratory contests. When he returned to Fortine he simply continued that involvement, firmly establishing himself in the Grange organization and educating himself to be a progressive spokesman on conservation issues.

In the 1920s Aldo Leopold, at the time a forester on the Gila National Forest in New Mexico, wrote an article in *American Forests* and *Forest Life*, the Magazine of the American Forestry Association (AFS), proposing to set aside primitive areas to be saved simply for their wild qualities. Leopold was not the first to offer the idea, but he became recognized as one of the more eloquent proponents. The essay's title introduced the whole subject: "A Plea for the Preservation of a Few Primitive Forests, Untouched by Motor Cars and Tourist Camps, Where Canoe and Pack Trips into Back Country May Still Be Enjoyed by Lovers of the Wild."

Weydemeyer, living in the forests of northwest Montana, read Leopold's article. The Montanan fully agreed with its author. Later Weydemeyer simply said, "[I was] just spurred on by Aldo Leopold's article." Leopold wrote:

"Has it ever occurred to us that we may unknowingly be just as shortsighted as our forefathers in assuming certain things to be inexhaustible, and becoming conscious of our error only after they have practically disappeared?... In fact, our tendency is not to call things resources until the supply runs short. When the end of the supply is in sight we, 'discover,' that the thing is valuable."

Weydemeyer wrote a passionate follow-up letter and the AFS published Weydemeyer's thoughts nearly in total.

"If roads were constructed to beauty spots in all the remaining unbroken forests and far mountains of the nation, probably ninety-five percent of the motor campers would be not better served and satisfied than they are at present, but one hundred percent of the wilderness lovers would be deprived of their pleasure in outdoor life."

Weydemeyer's exchange with Aldo Leopold (though they never met in person) gave direction to his conservation thinking. Weydemeyer's letter to the AFS was dominated by two themes then current in the emerging natural resource debate: timber harvest practices and the advent of forest roads that allowed "motor cars" to enter the wild country where formerly only the hiker or horseback rider traveled. The issues were simpler and clearer in 1925, but foreshadowed a broad debate. Weydemeyer's letter foresaw the demise of his backyard wilderness, and he felt impassioned about its preservation. For example, Weydemeyer wrote:

"If roads were constructed to beauty spots in all the remaining unbroken forests and far mountains of the nation, probably ninety-five percent of the motor campers would be not better served and satisfied than they are at present, but one hundred percent of the wilderness lovers would be deprived of their pleasure in outdoor life."

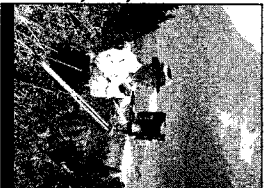
This uncannily clairvoyant statement, written in 1925, rings true for the wilderness lover of today perhaps more resoundingly than for those of Weydemeyer's time. Weydemeyer closed his letter to the AFS strongly urging the protection of his Whitefish Range. This is how Weydemeyer described his wilderness area:

"... the Whitefish Range, which with its outlying ridges, lies adjacent to the Canadian boundary and the west boundary of Glacier National Park, with a central roadless area of approximately 485,000 acres -- half as great as the park itself.

"Topographically the country in this area is much the same as that in the lower elevation of the park, and the fauna and flora are similar..."

"Many sections have never been visited by anyone other than a few old-timer hunters and trappers, and members of the United States Geological Survey party. Trails are usually few and distant, probably because of the surprising lack of forest fires in the past years. Though it thus admirably conforms to the requirements by the Western wilderness lover, it is by no means inaccessible to the ordinary camper or tourist who is willing to pay the just price of entry -- a few hours' travel from automobile roads by foot or horseback..."

Winton Weydemeyer



Aldo Leopold and Winton Weydemeyer held common beliefs. They took pleasure in and saw the value of natural, wild country. In his writing, Winton Weydemeyer lobbied for his backyard wilderness in a time prior to national wilderness legislation, or even government recognition of such places being administered by the youthful Forest Service. Weydemeyer would go on to many projects, many endeavors and many public service efforts in the coming decades, continuing to write and speak his beliefs, as did the nationally recognized Aldo Leopold.

Decades of Effort, Success and Disappointment

WEYDEMEYER'S LIFE between 1925 and 1964, the year of the passage of the National Wilderness Preservation Act, was a life lived in full. But he acted primarily from his ranch: tending livestock and growing Christmas trees (he harvested over a half million in his lifetime), serving his community as Grange Master, a founder of the local Soil Conservation District as well as the Lincoln County Fair, and assuming other community positions. He continued to tramp his woods, gaining remarkable skill as an amateur photographer. Over the years he published more than 300 of his own photographs (many developed in his bathtub) in regional and local papers.

... in his 56th year, he made room for love and family when he married Hallie M. Taylor Thompson.

In 1950 he ran for and won the State Senate seat for his district, serving 1951-1953. Twenty-first century Montana possesses a tumultuous political environment. The 1950s, though different in many ways, exhibited similar social turmoil. The Anaconda Company had an iron grip on extractive industry and state government as well as outright ownership of most daily newspapers. Labor was unionized and strong. Clashes between the Anaconda Company and union factions affected the entire country and established a national legacy. Weydemeyer entered this political maelstrom as a new State Senator. It may have been a no-win situation for him from the outset. Weydemeyer's own words describe the situation:

"I tried to recognize that they [labor unions] were a big voting group, not from the standpoint of getting votes from them, but that they were a part of the population and had their own concerns. I tried to go along reasonably. They'd come in session after session for something they knew they couldn't get.... I'd say, 'Do you want me to work for something I think you can get? Or do you want the whole hog for what you are asking?' ... I didn't go the extreme they asked for so they booted me out... I lost by 56 votes."

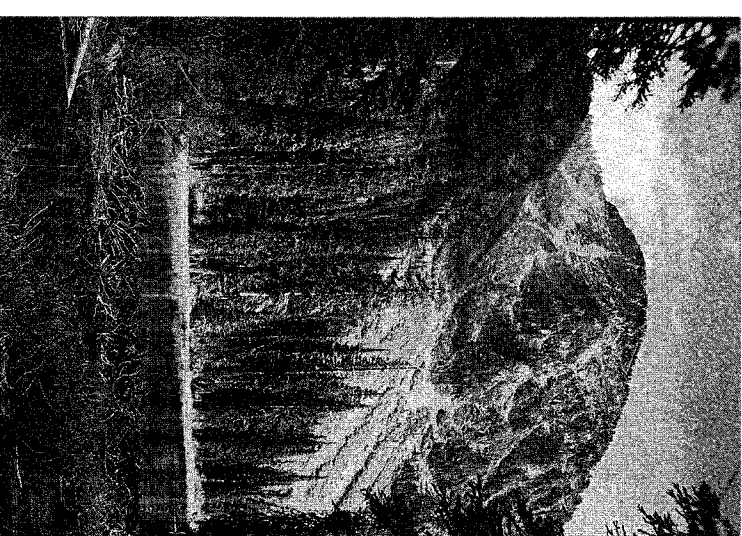
However wounded Weydemeyer might have felt at being turned out, he didn't quit. If anything, his release from political office permitted him to focus his energy on his conservation goals. He returned to Helena as a lobbyist during several sessions on behalf of the Montana Grange, and later for the Montana Conservation Council.

Winton Weydemeyer had focused his interests on advocacy and politics, but in his 56th year, he made room for love and family when he married Hallie M. Taylor Thompson, the widow of a fellow

conservationist, with one son and three daughters. Hallie Weydemeyer proved to be an activist who participated in community and state concerns as an ardent Republican.

In the late 1950s Weydemeyer and others established the Montana Conservation Council as an offshoot of the Northwest Conservation League. Weydemeyer served as its chapter's first president and as its chief lobbyist to the Montana legislature for years. This organization concerned itself with State Forest lands, water pollution control and conservation education. Weydemeyer invested years of his life in the Council, which did not expire until 1974, the year Montana's new Constitution came into effect. The Council tried to hew a middle ground with a board of directors composed of conservation leaders as well as leaders of industry, including then-powerful Montana Power Company's president, Paul Schneckel. However, the philosophical divide represented on the Council's board apparently prevented unified action on increasingly complex natural resource issues.

The Montana Wilderness Association decided to go it alone and advocate for Montana's most cherished wild country from within Montana.



Red Meadow Creek, photo: Winton Weydemeyer

In 1957, at about the same time as Weydemeyer involved himself with the Conservation Council, he teamed up with Montanans from across the state to create a conservation organization that has stood the test of time. The Montana Wilderness Association (MWA) was formed in 1958 explicitly to deal with the problem of the rapidly disappearing wild lands of Montana. The national Wilderness Society and the Sierra Club had been in existence for years, but rather than create a formal alliance with these national groups, the Montana Wilderness Association decided to go it alone and advocate for Montana's most cherished wild country from within Montana. Member knowledge was local and particular. Weydemeyer was a clear leader of this group, serving two terms as the first vice-president and then moving up a notch to serve as its second president.

The MWA sought Congressional protection for Montana wilderness, not just administrative protection, but iron-clad congressional designation that could not be tampered with due to shortsighted economic interests. It took MWA and national groups six years to achieve the National Wilderness Preservation Act signed by President Lyndon Baines Johnson in 1964. This act was monumental in preserving parts of America's wilderness heritage. Still, formal designation of wilderness was granted to only a fraction of suitable areas at the time of the measures enactment. Congress did not include Weydemeyer's own cherished Whitefish Range.



Near Bluebird Lake

In subsequent years Weydemeyer's Montana Wilderness Association grew from an all-volunteer organization to one with paid staff. Even as the natural resource and wildlands debate grew more complex and acrimonious, several Montana wilderness bills passed the US House of Representatives, and one made it all the way to President Reagan's desk only to suffer a pocket veto. In each go-round, the Northern Whitefish Range and Ten Lakes areas, a remnant of Weydemeyer's original 485,000-acre complement to Glacier National Park, failed to make the final draft. The area was usually horse-traded out and Weydemeyer, always seeing the bigger picture, would concede his beloved local interest for the greater good.

One of Weydemeyer's last acts as a regional conservation leader was his signing of the Kootenai Accords in 1991. This agreement between the lumber producers union from the Libby area and the Montana Wilderness Association determined which lands could be logged and which would be set aside for wilderness on the Kootenai National Forest. The agreement gave the appearance of both Weydemeyer and the unions having traveled full circle from the campaign days of 1954 when, as Weydemeyer recalled, "They booted me out." Such was Weydemeyer's ability to sit and talk conservation issues with anyone. Unfortunately, this final effort on Weydemeyer's part, after a long life of tireless effort, was branded as "extreme" by some, and was abandoned by the Montana Congressional delegation.

Conclusion

WEYDEMEYER was a life-long progressive Republican, Granger, conservationist and community leader. He lived through momentous changes in our culture's ability to alter the natural environment. He did all he could to balance economic demands with prudent conservation of the land. Weydemeyer reached further than his roots in Grange. Certainly, he passed beyond the stereotypical follower as he defended the land against those zealous to extract its resources without control, and exploit it for the fleeting, destructive pleasures of motorized recreation. Weydemeyer steadfastly held out as a progressive even as his party moved ever further to the political right.

"There isn't much left of the Whitefish Range... It's perfectly apparent that we haven't accomplished all we hoped for."

He attempted to hew to the middle course—to look to reason to resolve controversy. He balanced his desire to conserve the remnants of the beloved wild country of his youth with the demands of a growing nation of consumers. He understood the pressure such demands place on wilderness. Weydemeyer's activism was tempered by his living close to the land and alongside hard-working neighbors. He focused on accomplishing all he could for land and community. He worked to gain results as well as defend ideals.

Weydemeyer lived a remarkably full life. As Secretary of State Bob Brown observed of Weydemeyer in 1998, "In visiting with Weydemeyer, one had the feeling that he had really learned what Thoreau had gone to Walden Pond to discover. You felt that here was someone who had come face to face with the Great Spirit."

In 1991, the year before Weydemeyer died, he observed, "There isn't much left of the Whitefish Range... Actual wild lands that remain are only a small part of the original... It's perfectly apparent that we haven't accomplished all we hoped for. The wilderness bill[s] that passed didn't meet the objectives [early conservation leaders hoped to obtain]." In spite of that heartbreaking acknowledgment, Winton Weydemeyer remains a luminary in Montana conservation.

Weydemeyer's vision of a Whitefish Range wilderness remains for the present generation to realize. Naming this wilderness the Winton Weydemeyer Wilderness would honor his lifetime commitment to his community, Montana and the land.

A more comprehensive biography of Weydemeyer's life may be obtained from the Montana Wilderness Association, 307 1st Ave. East, Suite #20, Kalispell, Montana 59901, 406-755-6304, or via email to mwa@wildmontana.org.

Winton's Life List of Community Service

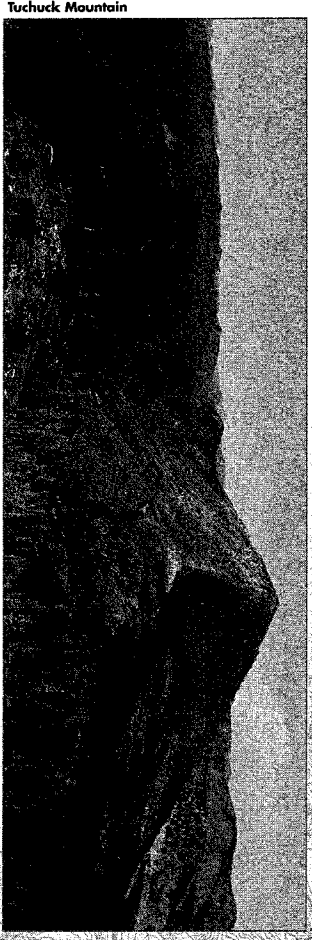
WINTON WAS A COMMUNITY MAN. He was born, raised, lived and worked, and died in Fortine, Montana. A listing of Winton's community service and accomplishments only suggest the range of his interests and commitment to his community and state:

- Graduated Highest Honors from Montana State University
- Fortine farmer and rancher for 68 years
- Christmas tree farmer and broker for 50 years
- Director, Moccasin Agricultural Experiment Station, Judith Gap, Montana (1924)
- Founder, local Soil Conservation District
- State Senator, Republican (1951-53)
- Founder, Montana Wilderness Association
- First and Second Vice President, Montana Wilderness Association
- Second President of the Montana Wilderness Association
- Founder, Montana Conservation Council
- Chapter President, Northwest Conservation League
- Lobbyist, Montana Grange
- Steward, Montana Grange Association
- Grange Marshall, National Grange Association
- Author, *A Grange Master's America*
- Published over 300 photos in regional and local periodicals
- Author, *Picture-Taking in Glacier National Park*
- Visitor Board, University of Montana, School of Forestry
- Blue and Gold Award, Montana State University
- AMC National Conservation Award, 1959
- Leadership role in passage of 1964 National Wilderness Act
- Member, Republican State Central Committee (until 1991)
- Founder, Lincoln County Fair
- Superintendent for Fruits, Grains, and Poultry, Lincoln County Fair
- Founding Inductee, Montana Hunting Hall of Fame (1992)

Give Me a Wilderness

BY WINTON WEYDEMEYER

Give me a wilderness to roam
Where the mountains climb to a far-off haze -
A great, broad land with each rocky lance
In stern defense against man's advance
With his lumber mills and clearing craze,
Saving its hunted life a home.
A wild, free land where a man must pay
In saner life for the right to stay.



Tuckuck Mountain

Give me a wilderness to love.
Let the lakes gleam out, and the dippers sing.
And the bear grass lean to the theme of spring:
Let the green woods creep 'til the peaks rise steep.
And the white sheep cling to the cliffs above.
All I shall claim is the right to be
One with the - growing, and calm, and free.

Give me a wilderness to save.
From the sloshing march of the greedy saws,
From the moneyed glide of cunning laws.
The black ash heap of the fire's grave.
And the blind attack of the motor throng.
Strong with a faith in the mountain's right,
Let me fight the foes of the crippled wild -
Cheered by the hiker's awed delight
And the song of a forest-loving child.

The following letter was published in *The Missoulian* (Date of publication unknown.)

The Truth About "Multiple Use"

Dear Editor:

What is multiple use of national forest lands?

Over and over, at log hauls and rallies, fairs and meetings, in talks and writings and on posters, spokesmen for the timber industry in western Montana have emphasized "multiple use, multiple use" — implying that only if logging is permitted on national forest lands is multiple use being accomplished. Demands are made for release of roadless lands for multiple use — meaning logging.

Again and again, in writings, speeches, and Congressional hearings, these same spokesmen and other label wilderness as "single use".

Both implications are erroneous and misleading. What are the facts?

Recognizing that national forest lands have varied uses and values, Congress in 1960 enacted the Multiple Use, Sustained Yield Act, which provides that the national forests "are to be managed for outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, and wildlife and fish purposes." Multiple Use is defined as "management of all the various renewable surface resources of the national forest so that they are utilized in a combination that will best meet the needs of the American people...with consideration being given to the relative values of the various resources, and not necessarily the combination of uses that will give the greatest dollar return or the greatest unit output."

The legislation states: "The establishment and maintenance of areas of wilderness are consistent with the purpose and provisions of this Act."

Multiple use does not mean that an area must be used for all purposes — which would be impossible. Neither does the act afford priority to timber harvesting.

Most national forest lands serve several purposes. Thus wilderness provides watershed protection, wildlife habitat, ecological preservation, opportunity for scientific research, and various forms of recreation. Plus the values of solitude and silence.

Let's face it. The nearest thing to single use of national forest lands is clearcut logging.

Winton Weydemeyer,
Box 77, Fortine, Montana.

September 15 (1992)

Dear Senator Burns:

I understand that a Congressional committee dealing with the Montana Wilderness Bill is considering adding the Thompson Seton area.

This is not a new proposal. The area is part of the Whitefish Range which I proposed to be protected as wilderness 67 years ago. Since that time similar recommendations have been made by others.

While the roadless section of the Range have over the years been reduced to a remnant of its former extent, that portion remaining is of sufficient size and quality to be eminently worthy of wilderness designation.

I speak from knowledge of the area. In winter I have climbed seven of its wild peaks; in summer, several additional ones. I have hunted in the area, and fished in five of its mountain lakes. I know that wilderness values are supreme.

Only a few scattered patches of timber possibly suitable for harvesting are included in the area. Prospecting over the years has revealed no signs of [mineral] deposits. Adjacent roadless and roaded areas provide ample opportunities for snowmobiling.

I trust that you will give serious consideration to approval of inclusion of this Thompson Seton area in the bill.

Respectfully,

Winton Weydemeyer

[p.s.] Addition of this area would be a lasting memorial to an early naturalist-writer-artist [Ernest Thompson Seton].

Winton Weydemeyer died a few months after this final plea for the protection of his beloved Whitefish Range.

The Ernest Thompson Seton Connection

ERNEST THOMPSON SETON never set foot in the Whitefish Range. But as a storyteller to a national audience in *Field and Stream Magazine*, he made the Whitefish Range famous across the nation. The notoriety Thompson Seton brought to this corner of Montana is part of the area's indelible history, as well as part of the allure that makes it unique.



Ernest Thompson Seton accomplished at least two significant tasks that brought him national fame: his exceptionally vivid stories of outdoor life and adventure, and his invention of the Boy Scouts of America. Both endure to this day. The 1913 US Geological Survey of the Whitefish Range placed names on the area's prominent peaks in honor of Thompson Seton's stories. Mount Thompson Seton, Kinklehorn Peak, Krag Peak, and Wain Peak all derive their names from the spinning of Thompson Seton's classic story Krag the Kootenay Ram.

Winton Weydemeyer's sister, Olga Weydemeyer Johnson, described the story in her own book, History of Tobacco Valley Plains, as follows:

"Trapper and hunter Scotty McDougall heard of the big ram in upper Grave Creek country, and knew he could get a lot of money for the exceptional head and horns of this old-timer, but during the long weeks of the chase through the roughest and rockiest country of upper Grave Creek and the Yakinkak, and north into British Columbia, Scotty became so attached to the tough, agile, sagacious old animal that when he shot him at last, by trick, he could not bear to part with the last earthly reminder of Krag's spirit. He had the head mounted, and reined with it to his mountainside cabin near Mountain Meadow on Grave Creek.

"The end of this true story is in a(n) 1897 snowslide; Scotty and his wrecked cabin were buried beneath it. When rescuers dug out Scotty's body, there beside it, almost uninjured, lay the magnificent head of Krag the Kinklehorn."

Wilderness is a Bipartisan Idea

SIGNIFICANT MAJORITIES OF AMERICANS, regardless of party affiliation, support strong environmental protection. They want their elected leaders to find practical, effective ways to protect public health and our natural heritage without an excess of political partisanship.

Wilderness is a basic and important American value. It is fundamentally a conservative idea. Our clean water flows from mountain wilderness. Our remnant wildlife populations find refuge in wilderness away from urban, suburban, and even our vast agricultural landscapes where deer, elk, bear and bison used to roam in great numbers. Our nation was born out of the wilderness, a heritage that runs deep through our nation's collective culture and psyche.

Krinklehorn Peak, photo: Winton Weydemeyer



Wilderness is a basic and important American value. It is fundamentally a conservative idea.

The issue for the proposed Winton Weydemeyer Wilderness is not whether the area is suitable for wilderness. Winton Weydemeyer knew the Whitefish Range as a wild continuation of Glacier National Park. The issue today is whether Montana's Congressional delegation can drop the rhetorical baggage that has crippled the wilderness debate over the past two decades.

It is time for Montana's Republican and Democratic Congressmen to end the gridlock over wilderness designation. What better way than to honor Republican State Senator Winton Weydemeyer than by designating a wilderness in his name. As Montana Secretary of State Bob Brown observed of Winton Weydemeyer in 1998, "In visiting with Winton, one had the feeling that he had really learned what Thoreau had gone to Walden Pond to discover. You felt that here was someone who had come face to face with the Great Spirit."

The Winton Weydemeyer Wilderness captures the bipartisan spirit to conserve the best of America.

Closing Words From Pat Williams



Montanans need to restart the state's thoughtful consideration of which of our remaining wild lands deserve federal wilderness designation. We have within our borders more than six million acres of undesignated wild lands.

It has been almost a quarter of a century ago that we began the struggle to protect this green and flourishing estate. Let's get on with that unfinished effort.

I commend those Montanans, including those in the northwestern part of the state, who are coming together as concerned and active citizens to petition the Congress to once again give its attention to the last best lands in this last best place.

— Pat Williams
Montana U.S. Congressman
1979-1997

Background image by Winton Weydemeyer

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Flathead-Kootenai Chapter of the Montana Wilderness Association would like to thank the family of Winton Weydemeyer, and in particular Mr. Art Weydemeyer, for their help and cooperation in retrieving Winton Weydemeyer's photographs, and for their permission to use those photos. We would also like to thank the Forever Wild Endowment and the Matthew Hansen Endowment Fund for their generous support, and Tom Harding, whose biography of Winton Weydemeyer forms the basis of the biography contained in this publication.

The painting of "Krag the Kootenay Ram" on page 28 is from the gallery of Peggy and Harold Samuels, private art dealers from Corrales, New Mexico.

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Keeping Montana Wild Since 1958!

Montana citizens established the Montana Wilderness Association in 1958 to champion the protection of the state's last great wild country. As such, MWA is the nation's oldest statewide conservation organization. MWA enjoys a long tradition of successful wilderness advocacy.

MWA members contributed substantially to the passage of the National Wilderness Preservation Act of 1964, the establishment of the Bob Marshall, Great Bear, Mission Mountain, Rattlesnake, Absaroka-Beartooth, Lee Metcalf, and Scapegoat Wilderness Areas, as well as the Wild and Scenic designation of the Flathead and Missouri Rivers, and the recent creation of the Missouri Breaks National Monument.

Today, MWA continues to seek wilderness protection for land in the Glacier-Bob Marshall country, the Cabinet-Yaak, Island Ranges of Central Montana, the Greater Yellowstone, Blue Ribbon headwaters, the Continental Divide, and the badlands, breaks, and prairies of Eastern Montana, in addition to the Winton Weydemeyer wildlands.

MWA invites you to join the effort to champion Montana's priceless natural heritage.

Count Me In! I want to help protect Montana's wilderness and traditional recreational opportunities for everyone.

As a member of the Montana Wilderness Association, I look forward to receiving the annual Wilderness Walks hiking guide, informative newsletters, and timely action alerts.

Annual Membership Categories (tax deductible)

\$20 _____ \$30 _____ \$50 _____ \$75 _____ \$100 _____ \$250 _____ Other _____

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Name(s) _____

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Area of special interest _____

Send to: Montana Wilderness Association, P.O. Box 635, Helena, MT 59624

Graphic design and center spread map created by Pete Thomas of Pete Thomas Creative, Inc.



petethomascreative.com